

Overview of the Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/5436.htm>

Purpose

The Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment will provide an analysis of present and future forest conditions and trends on all ownerships in the state, including analysis of market and non-market forces. It will identify threats to forest lands and resources. It will also identify forest related benefits and services. In addition, the Assessment will delineate priority forest landscape areas as well as any multi-state areas that are a regional priority.

The Assessment will support development of a long-term Resource Strategy specific to Indiana's forest needs.

Process

The Assessment process seeks to integrate, build upon, and complement other state natural resource assessments and plans. Stakeholder input and coordination will be facilitated to create a beneficial and useful product to inform State resource strategy and forestry practice in Indiana. Analysis is likely to be presented according to internationally recognized forest sustainability criteria but will focus on Indiana's most important forest issues. New technology will be leveraged to visually represent resource threats and benefits across the State. Accordingly, maps derived from various issue layers will be used in a weighted GIS overlay analysis that highlights priority areas.

Issues

The top five issues as identified by a survey of 1,300 forest owners, conservation employees, researchers, land managers and others who are involved with the forests on a daily basis

1. Conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources
2. Fragmentation and/or conversion of forests to another land use
3. Conservation of biodiversity (including plant and wildlife habitat)
4. Availability of land for public recreation
5. The spread and control of invasive species

The above ranking is based on number of respondents selecting the issue as "first" most important. (see Results below)

Stakeholders

Approximately 400 leaders of forestry related organizations including academic, research, government and non-governmental organizations helped to develop and

coordinate the stakeholder input process. Through their help 1,300 people responded to a forest issues survey. 606 people noted one or more "affiliated organization" on the survey. 270 people submitted additional input via the survey regarding Indiana's forests. 1,020 people (81.5% of respondents) are interested in being emailed a draft of the Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment for review.

The Indiana Forest Stakeholders Summit, an event held between June 24th and July 2nd invited these individuals and others throughout the State to attend one of four regional meetings to further develop exchange, input and partnership. Over 300 additional focused comments, suggestions and questions were considered and recorded in facilitated sessions at these events.

The Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, an established group representing a range of forestry interests in the state, continues to participate in these stakeholder processes along with, State wildlife agency, State Technical Committee, and applicable federal land management representatives.

Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment

Stakeholder Survey Results

May 15 - June 1, 2009

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	Level of concern				Relative importance		
	Survey response count	# Not concerned	# Very concerned	Rating average	"First" most important	Selected as 1st, 2nd or 3rd most important	Rank by total top 3 selections
Indiana forest issue							
Fragmentation and/or conversion of forests to another land use (e.g. development, homes, agriculture)	1289	32	862	3.55	189	507	1
Conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources	1292	7	831	3.60	199	425	2
The spread and control of invasive species	1260	20	851	3.59	127	421	3
Conservation of biodiversity (including plant and wildlife habitat)	1294	15	745	3.49	150	364	4
Counterproductive government forest conservation related policies (including taxation, zoning, etc.)	1270	30	612	3.33	75	249	5
Availability of land for public recreation	1291	114	423	3.00	142	234	6
High cost of forest ownership and low incentives to retain	1288	49	550	3.24	49	226	7
Conservation of forests that protect drinking water supplies	1286	17	778	3.52	51	206	8
Overpopulation of white-tailed deer	1288	131	410	2.90	47	194	9
Inadequate public education about forests	1291	34	476	3.19	38	166	10
Sustaining Indiana's forest product industry	1286	84	472	3.07	49	160	11
Lack of active management on forests	1284	58	393	3.05	38	146	12
Sustainable regeneration of oak woodlands	1281	27	523	3.25	29	138	13
Inadequate youth education about forests	1293	32	538	3.27	18	94	14
Lack of healthy woodlands and trees in urban areas, including city parks, street and yard trees	1282	68	430	3.04	16	90	15
The control of forest fires (forest fire suppression)	1286	157	314	2.71	36	73	16
The loss of fire dependent plant communities and habitats (restoration of fire-adapted lands)	1275	75	311	2.87	13	67	17
Other	217	n/a	n/a	n/a	24	61	18
Forests not managed for carbon storage (carbon sequestration aspects not considered)	1258	182	232	2.64	6	45	19

Press

<http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/newsitem.asp?id=35656>

<http://www.farmworldonline.com/News/NewsArticle.asp?newsid=8160>

<http://www.tmnews.com/stories/2009/06/28/news.nw-155804.tms>

<http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2009/jun/19/news/chi-ap-in-forestsurvey>

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